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SUBJECT: USAID/OFDA PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE SHELTER UPDATE

SUMMARY

¶1. On October 29, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Balochistan Province of Pakistan caused significant damage to the traditional mud and timber houses, primarily affecting Ziarat and Pishin districts, with some damage also reported in Harnai district. Different assessments produced a range of estimates of the number of houses damaged or destroyed, including the Government of Pakistan (GOP) military estimate of 2,000 houses and the U.N. Multi-Cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (MCRAM) finding of approximately 7,600 houses. The GOP, local groups, and humanitarian organizations immediately responded by providing emergency relief supplies, including blankets, tents, and plastic sheeting. While some humanitarian organizations plan to provide winterized tents, most are focusing on the provision of transitional shelters, which are generally built from locally available materials that can be reused to construct a permanent structure.

¶2. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) quickly determined that shelter was one of the primary humanitarian needs in the aftermath of the October 29 earthquake, and focused resources on contributing to the response in the shelter sector. The USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) shelter specialist provided technical assistance to GOP agencies and humanitarian organizations, while USAID/OFDA provided immediate shelter support through tents, blankets, and plastic sheeting distributed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Save the Children (SC)/US, and Relief International (RI). USAID/OFDA is working closely with NGO partners to provide timely and appropriate transitional shelter, in line with the shelter cluster and the GOP National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) shelter strategies, to help affected populations survive the winter season. End Summary.

SHELTER SITUATION

¶3. On October 29, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Balochistan Province of Pakistan caused significant damage to the traditional mud and timber housing stock, which are the predominant form of housing in the region. Ziarat and Pishin districts were the hardest hit by the earthquake, with some damage also

reported in Harnai district. Different assessments produced a range of estimates of the number of houses damaged or destroyed, ranging from the GOP military estimate of 2,000 houses to the U.N. MCRAM finding of approximately 7,600 houses. The Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP) reported that more than 10,000 houses were damaged, but indicated that the assessment considered every house with any cracks in the mud walls or roofs as structurally unsafe.

¶4. Part of the difference in the housing numbers lies in varying definitions of what constitutes a house in the affected areas, where many extended families live in compounds with multiple rooms facing a courtyard. Humanitarian organizations participating in the shelter cluster agreed on a standard of one-room shelter units meant to house an individual family. Therefore, each nuclear family in the extended family is to be provided a one-room transitional shelter. Different organizations also use different estimates of family size, but generally agree that nuclear families in the affected areas are large, ranging from 7 to 10 persons.

¶5. Based on the initial assessment results, including the BRSP assessment, the shelter cluster identified a need ranging from 10,000 to 17,000 such one-room units to provide transitional shelter for populations to survive the region's harsh winter season, after which the GOP's rebuilding programs are meant to begin. The chairman of the GOP's NDMA has specifically requested that humanitarian organizations provide transitional shelter using more permanent materials to meet medium-term shelter needs. The NDMA indicated that shelter was the first priority, and that all affected populations should be out of non-winterized tents by the beginning of the winter season, with winterized tents only used if necessary. On November 17, USAID/OFDA staff received reports that the NDMA is planning to take on an increasing coordination role, assigning each humanitarian organization providing transitional shelter to a specific affected location, a role often carried out by the shelter cluster.

¶6. The GOP, humanitarian organizations, and a variety of local groups have already distributed approximately 14,000 non-winterized tents as of November 10, according to the NDMA, as well as plastic sheeting, blankets, and other relief supplies meant to meet immediate shelter needs. Other humanitarian organizations, such as the Salvation Army, Oxfam, SC/UK, and the American Red Cross, planned to provide winterized tents. On November 10, the NDMA estimated that approximately 2,500 winterized tents had been distributed or were in the pipeline to be distributed.

¶7. However, most humanitarian organizations providing shelter assistance are now supporting winterized transitional shelter, built from locally available materials that can be reused to construct a permanent structure. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has pledged to construct at least 2,000 transitional shelter units in coordination with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society. The Turkish Red Crescent is setting up 10 winterized container structures designed to accommodate up to 120 families. Islamic Relief is providing 200 transitional shelter units, while the organization Islamic Hands is also providing 200 units. USAID/OFDA is planning to support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to build approximately 700 winterized transitional shelters. The International Organization for Migration, the U.N. Human Settlements Program, and BRSP have built a demonstration shelter in Quetta, comprised of bamboo roof framing, corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheeting, plastic sheeting, and bags filled with sand

and dirt. USAID/OFDA plastic sheeting provided by RI was used in the Quetta model. The organizations plan to build similar demonstration shelters in affected communities and rapidly implement a larger-scale building program.

USG RESPONSE

¶8. On November 5, the USAID/OFDA shelter specialist arrived in Pakistan, and immediately traveled to earthquake-affected areas in Balochistan Province to conduct a shelter assessment and meet with representatives from the GOP military, provincial authorities, and humanitarian organizations. Following the initial assessment, the shelter specialist met with a number of humanitarian organizations and government agencies in Islamabad to help provide technical support for the emerging shelter strategy, building on experience from the 2005 earthquake response. On November 10, the shelter specialist participated in the initial meeting of the shelter cluster, chaired by IFRC.

¶9. USAID/OFDA has contributed USD 1 million to help ICRC to provide immediate humanitarian assistance, including shelter and emergency relief supplies. As of November 13, ICRC reported providing 690 tents and 1,475 blankets in Ziarat District and 150 tents, 345 tarpaulin sheets, 330 blankets, and 186 mats in Pishin District. ICRC is also providing food, health, and water sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance.

¶10. On November 6, to help meet immediate shelter needs, USAID/OFDA airlifted 530 rolls of plastic sheeting, valued at approximately USD 260,000 including transport, from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Dubai to Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan Province. The shipment was received by RI, with logistical support from RIQs local partner the Taragee Foundation. RI has distributed the plastic sheeting to villages in affected areas of Pishin and Ziarat districts through a network of local organizations. The sheeting should benefit at least 26,500 people by improving wind and water proofing of non-winterized tents provided by other humanitarian organizations and the GOP. The sheeting can also be reused in transitional shelter.

¶11. USAID/OFDA also provided USD 100,000 to SC/US to locally procure additional plastic sheeting. SC/US has distributed the 4,000 sheets to affected populations in Ziarat District, along with tents and emergency relief supplies provided by SC/UK.

¶12. To date, USAID is the only major donor focusing on providing winterized transitional shelter. USAID/OFDA is planning to provide at least 700 winterized transitional shelter units through NGO partners to earthquake-affected households in Ziarat and Pishin districts. Together, the NGOs will provide transitional shelter to an estimated 6,600 people.

¶13. The NGOs are pursuing a self-build approach, where the NGOs will hire local craftsmen to build demonstration shelters in the community, and help train affected families to build a shelter sufficient for at least the winter. The NGOs are consulting with local communities on appropriate shelter design using locally available materials, as well as participating in the shelter cluster, now based in Quetta. NGO designs include a roof made from CGI sheeting, with a timber framework and an exterior made from plastic sheeting backed with insulative materials. While unable to visit the initial NGO transitional shelter models due to security considerations, the USAID/OFDA shelter specialist has worked closely with the NGOs on

the shelter design to ensure that it is earthquake-resistant, low cost, and meets the international SPHERE shelter standards.

¶14. USAID/OFDA is also supporting complementary cash-for-work and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs, in conjunction with the transitional shelter programs. Cash-for-work programs will provide for skilled labor support for shelter construction, and help to inject needed currency into the local economy. The NGOs will also help affected households to rebuild communal latrines damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. Such latrines are largely used by female members of the household for increased privacy and safety, and therefore address important protection concerns from the community.

CONCLUSION

¶15. The USAID/DART quickly determined that shelter was one of the primary humanitarian needs in the aftermath of the October 29 earthquake, and focused resources on contributing to the response in the shelter sector. The USAID/OFDA shelter specialist provided technical assistance to GOP agencies and humanitarian organizations, while USAID/OFDA provided immediate shelter support through tents, blankets, and plastic sheeting distributed by ICRC, SC/US, and RI. USAID/OFDA is working closely with NGO partners to provide timely and appropriate transitional shelter, in line with the shelter cluster and the GOP NDMA shelter strategies, to help affected populations survive the winter season.

PATTERSON